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unfounded in public opinion and unsupported by public gratitude, it must have been long since obliterated, circumstanced as his was.

But we may justly infer that he was not only Frenchly affectionate in look and manner, but that the principles theoretically imbibed by education, were converted into active habits of the mind, and that his highest wish was to please his God; and the next, to be generally useful to his earthly intelligent offspring. That he showed the community an example in agriculture and the arts may be fairly concluded, not only from what has been related of him, but from the highly finished, and cultivated state in which fame says he left the Grove, the place of his residence near Kells. It is said to have abounded with the nicest shrubs, the most delicious fruit, and the finest forest trees. It has been said to me, that he was temperate in his life, yet hospitable, willing to share his cup and his crust with the wa-faring man. The bounty he derived from his patron, through the medium of the people was reverberated back on society through different channels, tending to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

Let those who would live after death like Aiton, imitate his example.

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*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

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A COMPARATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF EDUCATION, WITH THAT OF THE LAST AGE.

"**T**HERE are no children," exclaims a late French writer, "childhood is blotted out of the map of life." The freedom of manners, introduced by the present system, has been carried so far, as in many cases to substitute pertness for vivacity, and to release from those salutary restraints, which were formerly considered as the ornament of youth. In laying aside the forbidding austerity of ancient manners, and that repulsive distance, at which young people were kept, an opposite extreme has been generated, and a doubt arises whether the improvement is so great, as may appear on first view. I am no advocate for the old system, there

is much in it deserving of condemnation, but are we altogether gainers by the change? In former times probably the young people, who were much left to themselves, were perhaps in their separate societies, as noisy and indecorous as any of the present day; but the youth now should prize the privilege of being allowed to mix in company on equal terms. They should not abuse this liberty, and by their vociferations stun the ears of their seniors, who may be reasonably allowed to expect that common sense, and improving, and interesting subjects, should not be altogether banished from conversation, to make way for that noisy mirth, the pert witticisms, and that almost total absence of what may be denominated *mind*, which too generally characterize modern manners. In the present day, Miss just set loose from the fashionable boarding school, is eager to display her accomplishments, her drawings, her music, and those things, well enough in their subordinate places, with which girls are now tricked out as artists, and which they are in danger of mistaking for the solid acquirements of real usefulness.

"Knowledge is proud, that she has learned so much,  
Wisdom is humble, that she knows no more."

But the germ of future improvement is wanting; the really useful talents of the mind, that call forth reflection, and constitute wisdom, are not brought into action. These ephemera buzz and amuse, while the season of youth lasts, but as they are making no preparation for acting their future important parts well, they trifle away youth, and lose the season of improvement; for in youth only are the materials for future usefulness laid up. "If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit." It is frequently alleged in the cant of conversation, which affixes no precise, or well defined meaning to words, that youth must have their season of folly. Never was a more unwise sentiment expressed. It is not to be presumed that the pursuits of youth and age will be alike, nor is it necessary that they should be entirely regulated by one

standard. I am not so unreasonable as to class the innocent pleasantries of youth, under the harsh term of folly. I object only to passing the boundaries of right by levities leading almost imperceptibly into indiscretions, or suffering mirth so far to encroach as to leave a small portion of time for reflection, and acquiring useful knowledge.

" See how the world its veterans rewards,  
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards ;  
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,  
Young without lovers, old without a friend."

My observations have hitherto been confined to the female sex. Young men in addition to the levities common to both, have more serious dangers to encounter, inasmuch as the tone of fashionable manners allows them a much greater latitude, and unwisely permits an injudicious relaxation of the moral code on their parts, to pass with very little reprehension ; so that young men seldom stop at the threshold, but often plunge deeply into vice. The habit of drinking, begun through a deference to custom, and persisted in through a false shame of appearing singular in the right, till a fatal inclination is often acquired, is generally the introducer to those irregular courses.

Suitable female society has a powerful tendency to lead young men from the grossness of this vice, and in general to refine their manners, and all young men who can have this privilege, should not fail thankfully to avail themselves of it. The poet, Cowper, furnishes a strong instance of the benefits of the society of polished females. We admire the neatness and elegance of this poet, who was so well skilled in the anatomy of the human mind. It is a curious speculation to indulge in a calculation, how far he was indebted to his female friends for the delicate polish of his poetry, and what the difference might have been, if he had continued the solitary and comfortless tenant of chambers in the Middle Temple. The sexes are necessary for the mutual improvement of each other. I wish both sexes by a more full cultivation of their minds, to raise

the tone of conversation to a higher pitch. A judicious course of reading communicates new ideas, to supply conversation, and to prevent that sameness and insipidity, which too often occur in the conversation of those who seek for no fresh supplies to defecate and purify the channels of colloquial intercourse. Conversation too often resembles either the muddy current, polluted with the impurities of the surrounding banks, or the mountain stream, rapid and contracted, tumbling over the intervening obstructions with noisy and tumultuous roar. It is the smooth, deep river, flowing equably, and acquiring in its progress the addition of fresh contrivance streams, that is so highly useful and truly ornamental.

Youth read too much for mere amusement, without considering the ulterior and higher objects of future improvement. Hence novels are the favourite food, generally unsubstantial, and not nutritive, and not unfrequently like the champignon or mushroom, concealing poison under a pleasant taste. I am not so rigid a censor as entirely to forbid novels, for I have known a few good ones, but I object to the indiscriminate reading of all the trash published under this name, with an appetite as voracious as the dragon of Wantley Churches, of whom it is sung, that in his attacks when,

" He used to come on a Sunday,  
Whole congregations were to him,  
As a dish of salmungundi."

Novels too often give false pictures of life, and have led many a youthful mind to fatal errors. They too frequently inculcate the omnipotence of love, and all the fanciful poetical ideas of it, which have passed current among silly writers, who have borrowed from one another, without the trouble of invention, or of examining how far their fictions agree with the realities of life.

Without confounding the good with the bad, and excluding all, I would recommend a very select and sparing use of novels in a course of youthful reading ; let the works of our best poets form also a part, but in these also there is need of selection, for

some of the poetical tribe, have strangely mistaken indelicacy for wit; history, moral, and philosophical productions, should also form a part of a juvenile library for both sexes; I would also recommend such writings as Dugald Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.—Works of this class tend to elevate us to a more correct view of our moral constitution, and our mental frame, and without bewildering us in the labyrinths of metaphysics, bring us to be better acquainted with ourselves.

Such a course of reading, although some may consider it as of too severe a cast, would soon become pleasant to us. The force of habit is a deep-rooted principle in the human mind, and may be happily brought to the aid of fixing virtue. It is a maxim, the foundation of which is deeply laid in our nature, "choose that path which is best and custom will soon render it the most agreeable."

A well directed plan of study steadily persevered in, would increase the advantages of conversation, and improve our "youth, they might learn from the wisdom of age" while the seniors would be far from despising "to be cheered by the sallies of youth." *Knowledge is power*, and the more is acquired by reading, the higher are the conversational powers improved, and the greater interest is given to conversation, by the ability to furnish more materials to embellish it. *Ignorance is weakness*, and the less is known the less pleasing conversation becomes, till as the human mind must be employed, noise is substituted for sense, and sound for substance, so that in general it may be safely asserted that where noisy mirth most generally prevails, sterling sense is most wanting. An unfurnished house produces the greatest echo, and an empty cask the loudest sound.

Youth educated according to the best modes of the present system, I consider as superior to those produced under the old system. I am not an admirer of times past; the old fashioned embroidery, and the laborious trifling of antiquated needle-work,

are fit emblems of the ancient mode of education. I compare the present system, to the superficial, but lighter efforts of the needle, in the present day in which usefulness is too much sacrificed to show, but in which there is still something to please by its neat variety. The one was too cumbersome, and the other too superficial. I wish to see the infusion of more *mind*. In running from one extreme, let us not fall into the opposite.

Our ancestors raised the massy pillar, and the heavy unwieldy wall, which by its extreme thickness almost excluded the light, and gave to the interior of the house, a most gloomy appearance. The moderns run up their houses with thin walls, slight partitions, and in some instances without party-walls to separate adjoining houses, with fronts almost entirely of glass, so as to make the internal arrangement dazzling and glittering; but security and usefulness are sacrificed to show. The comparison holds with respect to the ancient and modern systems of education. Both have their striking defects. My aim would be to combine the substantial security of the one, with the neat lightness of the other, and equally to remove the gloominess of the cloyster, and the frippery of the modern edifice, scarcely able to bear the attacks, with which the rude blasts of an inclement sky, are liable to visit it.

After witnessing the noisy mirth, and the too great freedom of modern manners, the reflecting mind is sometimes driven back to wish for a return of the stiff and precise manners of former days, but a little further reflection convinces that this relapse would not essentially improve the state of society, for if there were formerly a greater appearance of decorum in manners, this show was much owing to what was disagreeable being more kept out of view, and hypocritical covering chiefly made the difference. Therefore instead of *retrograding*, I would strongly recommend an improvement of the present system, retaining its neatness, and lightness, but increasing its strength by a higher tone of morality, and a greater degree of intellectual improvement. K.